DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 138 140 HE 008 793

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TITLE Appalachian College Administrator: Characteristics and Career Patterns.
PUB DATE [77]
NOTE 12p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Personnel; *Administrator Background; *Administrator Characteristics; Age; *Careers; Colleges; Community Colleges; Employment Experience; *Higher Education; Occupational Aspiration; Occupational Mobility; Occupational Surveys; Private Colleges; Professional Education; Public Schools; Tables (Data); Universities
IDENTIFIERS *Appalachia

ABSTRACT

Administrators in 191 two- and four-year colleges in the Appalachian Region were surveyed. Characteristics analyzed in the study included: age; years in currert position; formal administration study; recent professional development; previous career positions; number of states worked in previously; immediate previous career position; special previous career experience; mobility within the present institution, and the next career position desired. These data are arranged in tables, and from the results, typical career patterns are derived and described. (MSE)

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Appalachian College Administrator: Characteristics and Career Patterns

Charles Emery and John Andes*

College Presidents, Academic Deans and Deans of Students; who are they? What are their characteristics? What are their backgrounds? What are their aspirations? Higher Education is important in our society and its leaders are an essential part. This article presents some answers to these and similar questions for the positions of college presidents and top academic and student affairs administrators in Appalachia.

Population

The study included all two and four year colleges in the Appalachian Region as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission. This area extends from New York to Alabama and includes all or part of twelve states. Public and private institutions are included. The total population was one hundred and ninety-one (191) institutions.* One hundred twenty-seven (127) institutions responded (sixty-eight percent), but usable questionnaires were not received from all of the administrative positions.

HE008793

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*Details of the study are found in Emery, Charles E. "Professional Development Needs of Higher Education Administration in the Appalachian Region." Morgantown, West Virginia University, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, 1975.

TABLE 1
Return by Sex of Position

	Male	Female	Total	Percent Return of Population
President	67	4	71	.37
Academic Affairs	81	4	85	.45
Student Affairs	61	14	75	.39

The rate of usable returns was thirty-seven to forty-five percent for the positions studied in this paper. As these are returns from a population rather than a sample and as they represented the population in terms of sex, level and type of institutions, the returns were considered representative.

Characteristics

Presidents were older than academic affairs administrators (AAA) who were older than student affairs administrators (SAA).

TABLE 2
Age of Administrators by Position

	No. of Usable returns	Under 30	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 up
President	70	1	7	25	31	6
Academic Affairs	84	2	30	31	12	10
Student Affairs	75	4	32	26	10	3

The full age continum was found for each position, but the median age range for presidents was 50-59 and the median range for AAA and SAA was 40-49. Presidents had the longest period in their current position (6.95) but this was about three years less than other studies had shown for the national population of college presidents.

TABLE 3
Years in Current Position

	N	Mean	Range
President	69	6.95	1-24
Academic Affairs	85	4.22	1-20
Student Affairs	75	4.04	1-17

AAA and SAA had significantly lower years of experience than presidents but were almost at the national figure.

Sixty-five percent of the presidents have an earned doctoral degree, seventy-three percent of the AAA and only thirty-eight percent of the SAA have received a doctoral degree. The PhD degree is dominant for presidents and AAA, the EdD degree is dominant for the SAA. The figures for all three positions are less than the national average for earned doctoral degrees. Most of the others had earned master's degrees except for one president and one SAA with only a bachelor's degree.

In a major derivation from the national norms a majority of all three positions had formal administrative study.

TABLE 4
Formal Administration Study

	N	Higher Ed Adm	Ed Adm	Bus Adm	Pub Adm	Church Adm	Hospital Adm
President	71	46	32	10	11	13	0
Academic Affairs	85	41	33	19	14	14	0
Student Affairs	75	45	29	11	15	16	3

In previous studies the percent of administrators who had formal study in administration ranged from ten to forty-seven percent. One of the reasons for the high level is the fact that over one hundred of the two hundred and thirty-one respondents had experience in public schools (Table 9). A caution

should be noted as the formal administrative study may consist of a single course.

Another strong characteristic of Appalachian College Administrators is their continual professional development.

TABLE 5
Professional Development During Last Year

	N	No Resp	None	Seminar/ Workshop	Work Exp	Conference	In-Serv	Prof Read	Travel	Compl. Degree
President	70	18	4	28	8	3	6	1	1	1
Academic Affairs	83	14	1	40	11	10	4	2	1	0
Student Affairs	75	9	3	34	10	6	7	2	2	2

A majority of the respondents for each position had participated in professional development during the previous year. Three had completed a college degree and fifteen others had taken formal college course work.

Appalachian administrators have fewer doctoral degrees than their national counterparts but they have more work in administration and are continuing to develop their professional skills and competencies.

Career Pattern

The career patterns of appalachian central office administrators in higher education are not unitary but diverse, involving several positions, states and types of institutions.

TABLE 6
Previous Career Positions

	N	0-3	4	5	6+	Mean
President	70	12	14	22	22	5.01
Academic Affairs	84	22	17	23	23	4.57
Student Affairs	75	25	33	10	18	4.33

Table 6 does not include military service or positions held while in full time graduate study. Most presidents and AAA are in their fifth or sixth position. The pattern for presidents and AAA is one step longer than SAA who are in their fourth position. The career pattern is at least one step (position) shorter for private college administrators and two-year college administrators while public four year college administrators tend to have an additional step beyond the median.

Most of the administrators have worked in two or more states, with SAA the least mobile of three groups. Private college presidents are the most

TABLE 7
States Served by Administrators

	N	1	2	3	4	5+	Mean	Non-App. State
President	71	30	18	14	6	3	2.13	28
Academic Affairs	84	37	33	13	5	3	2.04	38
Student Affairs	75	30	35	8	3	2	1.79	24

mobile of all sub-groups averaging three states. Forty percent of the presidents and forty-five percent of the AAA have held positions outside of the Appalachian region while thirty-two percent of the SAA have held positions outside of Appalachia. The mobility data is consistent with most national and regional studies indicating that Appalachian college administrators are more mobile than is generally expected.

The career patterns expressed in Table 8 indicate the first major

TABLE 8
Immediate Previous Career Position by
Current Administrative Position

	Pres	Acad Aff	College Teaching	Bus Adm	Pub Sch	Dept Chm	Adm Aff	ASS Acad Aff	Church	St Aff	Non Educ
President	5	36	8	3	9				2		9
Academic Affairs		13	25		4	13	13	7	3		3
Student Affairs			14		8		4	2	5	39	3

differences between the three positions. Previous differences discussed have been minor but the previous career positions are significantly different for the three positions. Presidents tend to come from a senior academic affairs position while SAA come from junior positions within the student affairs area. AAA's have no single dominant career pattern. Although college teaching exceeds all others as the major prior position, other frequent positions are: another senior position in academic affairs, department chairperson or a junior position in administrative affairs. College teaching is stronger in private and two-year colleges and administrative affairs is stronger in public four-year colleges. Most of those who come from public schools are in public two-year colleges. An interesting point is that assistant or associate academic dean is not a strong career step, with less than nine percent moving through this postion. Church or denominational work is a career step in private four and two-year colleges that have denominational relationships.

Almost all public four-year college administrators had their previous positions in a public four-year college or a public university. Private four-year college administrators had a significantly different career pattern. Most of them had their previous positions in a private college or denominational work. Public two-year college administrators had three major prior types of employees: public two-year colleges, public school districts or four-year colleges.

Over one hundred of the administrators (43.72%) have worked in public or parochial education. Several have worked their way through the public school career ladder and have moved to president or dean of public two-year colleges. This usually occurs in a school district where the two-year college is part of the district. Church or denominational experience is

more frequent in the private denominational four-year college. Business and government experience occur with similar regularity in all types of institutions but tend to be early in the administrator career pattern.

TABLE 9
Special Previous Career Experience

	Pub or Priv School Teacher/ Counselor	PPS Superv	PPS Prin	PS Supt	SDE	Gov.	Chur	Bus
President	28	2	15	6	3	4	13	5
Academic Affairs	26	2	6	1	1	6	9	7
Student Affairs	39	0	6	0	1	4	13	7

Consistent with earlier data on states served and number of positions is the data that only twelve persons in the returns have spent their total career pattern in a single institution of higher education. As presidents

TABLE 10
Career and Institution

	Career in Same Institution	Percent	Promoted to Current Position From Within Institution	Percent
President	4	.06	20	.28
Academic Affairs	4	.05	38	.45
Student Affairs	4	.05	38	.51

are more mobile it is consistent to find few (28%) promoted within their same institution and most of these are found in private two and four year colleges. Less than ten percent of public college administrators are promoted in their same institution. There is a strong tendency to promote SAA and AAA within the same institution.

TABLE 11
Next Career Position Desired

	N	No Change	Pres	Teach	Retire	Acc Aff	St Aff	Counseling	Hi Adm Pos	Other	No Response
President	71	17	10	14	11	1	0	0	0	6	12
Academic Affairs	85	11	13	17	12	7	0	1	2	9	13
Student Affairs	75	7	8	6	2	2	9	3	14	10	14

In response to the question as to the next career position desired, no strong trend is evident.

This lack of a pattern for any position may reflect the current state of unrest and turmoil in higher education or simply that most of them have no strong desire to change positions. The most frequent response is to go back to classroom teaching perhaps reflecting a memory of the "good ole days" when things were less rushed. Those SAA desiring to become presidents should study Table 8 which indicates that such a career move is rare.

Typical Career Patterns

The patterns were developed by combining the career pattern for each position and type of institution. The typical statements represent the modal responses in the study.

(1) Public: Presidents

The typical Public College President has an earned PhD and is in his middle fifties. This is his sixth career position (fifth if in public 2 year college) and he has been in his current position over six years. He came to this position from an academic office position (public school if in public 2 year college) and has served in two states, both in the appalachian region.

(2) Private: Presidents

The typical Private College President has an earned PhD and is in his late forties. This is his fifth career position and he has been in his current position for over seven years. He has served in three states or counties and at least one was outside of the appalachian region. His previous positions were in academic offices.

(3) Public: Academic Affairs

The typical chief administrator of academic offices in a public college is in his late forties, has an earned PhD and is in his fourth year in his current position. This is his sixth career position (fourth if in public two year college) and his previous position was a lower level college (public school if in two year college) administrative position. His career has included at least two states.

(4) Private: Academic Affairs

The typical chief administrator for academic affairs in a private college is almost forty with an earned PhD and five years experience in his current position. He has held five previous career positions and has served in 2.5 states, of which one was outside of the appalachian region. His previous career position was college teaching or department chairman.

(5) Public: Student Affairs

The typical chief administrator for student affairs in a public college is in his middle forties with over five years experience in his current position. He has an earned master's degree and is in his fourth career position (third if in a public two year college). He has served in only one state. He has public school experience and was promoted from a position in student affairs in the same institution.

(6) Private: Student Affairs

The typical chief administrator for student offices in a private college is in his early forties and has completed three years in his current position. This is his third career position and all previous positions have been in the same state. He was promoted from within the institution.

Summary

This study involved presidents, chief level administrators in academic affairs and student affairs, that are employed in two year and four year private and public colleges in the Appalachian Region. The population included 191 institutions of which sixty-seven percent responded.

According to this study, a low number of females, ten percent, are employed as administrators.

The presidents are predominantly the oldest of all the administrators with a median age range of 50-59. The Academic Affairs and Student Affairs are the youngest age group of all administrators with a median range of 40-49.

The presidents also have the longest tenure of all administrators with 6.95 years. The Academic Affairs (4.22 years) and Student Affairs (4.04) years) have the shortest tenure which could be attributed to being close to the "daily firing line" with faculty and students.

Both the Ph.D. and Ed.D. are found to have been acceptable for the position of President with the Ph.D. being dominant. The Ph.D. is also dominant for the Academic Affairs while the Ed.D. is dominant for the Student Affairs Administrator. However, the figures for all three are less than the national average for earned doctoral degrees.

Two strong professional characteristics of the Appalachian College Administrators are their continued professional development and their formal study in administration. It was invigorating to learn that the Appalachian Administrators are continuing to develop their professional skills and competencies.

The career patterns of these Administrators are diversified, involving

several positions, states and types of institutions. The mobility rate is consistent with most national and regional studies that Appalachian College Administrators are more mobile than is generally expected. Most presidents are in their fifth position, while Academic Affairs and Student Affairs are in their fourth position. Private college presidents are the most mobile of all administration, averaging three states and Student Affairs administrators being the least mobile of the three groups. Only twelve persons in the returns have spent their total career pattern in a single institution of higher education. This is understandable as less than ten percent of public administrators are promoted in their same institution.

It was of significant importance to find that Academic Affairs Administrators have no single dominant career pattern but that Presidents tend to come from a senior Academic Affairs position, while Student Affairs Administrators come from junior positions within the Student Affairs area. Church or denominational work is a career step in private four- and two-year colleges that have denominational relationships. Almost all public four-year college administrators had their previous positions in a public, four-year college or a public university.

Although there is no strong trend, the most frequent response to the next career position desired is to go back to classroom teaching. This lack of pattern for any position may reflect the current state of unrest and turmoil in higher education or simply that most administrators have no strong desire to change positions.

If further data or discussion is desired the reader may contact either author.